

**Town of Barkhamsted**  
**Incorporated 1779**

**Donald S. Stein**  
**First Selectman, Town of Barkhamsted**

**HB 7027      “An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth 2019, and Making Appropriations Therefor”**

The Governor’s proposed budget makes several changes that would significantly impact Connecticut municipalities. I testified on February 14 in opposition to one such proposal that would require towns to pay 100% cost of the Resident State Trooper program. There are other proposals in the Governor’s budget that would impact towns and cities, in particular, the requirement that municipalities pay one-third of the employer’s share of teacher retirement benefits. This proposal also makes changes to the distribution of education funding. First, it would restructure ECS distribution, and second it would transfer those funds to a new grant for special education. It is also not clear that the special education is a grant, rather than a reimbursement. These proposals, when coupled together, could have dire consequences on Barkhamsted.

Barkhamsted has not been immune from having to make difficult financial decisions. These decisions have forced us to eliminate all but the most essential services or highway maintenance and winter maintenance and education. Even when municipal aid is cut, mandate relief is denied and additional state mandates are imposed, we must continue our service-delivery responsibilities to our residents.

If the Governor’s budget is enacted, Barkhamsted would be required to pay \$409,944 in both FY 18 and FY19 into the teacher’s retirement program. This is a large amount that would be difficult to pay without shifting a large cost onto our property taxpayers. And additionally, it is a cost that we have no ability to negotiate with our teachers.

We are also very concerned with the Governor’s proposal that would reconfigure ECS funding, and establish a Special Education Grant, which would replace the existing Excess Cost grant. The new funding formula would reduce Barkhamsted’s ECS funding by more than 36%. This reduction, along with the burden of having to 1/3 of the employer’s portion of the teacher’s retirement benefits means a drastic shift of cost to our property taxpayers and could result in additional taxation in excess of \$500,000, a 1.5 mill increase and a result tax increase approaching 10%. This is a great problem for our residents, particularly our senior population.

**Town of Barkhamsted**  
**Incorporated 1779**

We know that as the state grapples with historic deficits, the temptation to cut municipal aid will remain. Municipal aid is an enticing target whenever the State's budget gets tight.

I ask that you don't balance the state budget on the backs of local property taxpayers. Instead, reject the Governor's proposals relating to teachers retirement, education funding, as well as the changes to the cost structure of the Resident State Trooper program.

In addition, we ask for structural financial changes to provide alternative revenue sources and allow for greater sufficiency outside of the State coffers.

Thank you for your consideration.